

RESOLUTION No. 16-184

WHEREAS, the City Council and the Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, are apprised that Mrs. Janie Adams Holifield will be honored for her active volunteerism in the local community during the "2016 Honoring Our Elders Celebration", sponsored by the Rosetta James Foundation, held at the Jackson Center on March 12, 2016; and,

WHEREAS, the Rosetta James Foundation was founded in December 2006. It is a 509 (a) (2) public charity and educational organization founded for the purposes of providing scholarships to deserving students and recognizing the contributions of the elderly in the community while promoting volunteerism and community outreach; and,

WHEREAS, the Foundation's famous "Honoring Our Elders Celebration" is named in honor of Mrs. Rosetta James, a native of Akron, Alabama, in recognition of her outstanding and extraordinary dedication and service to many communities by way of active citizenship. Mrs. James has been determined to seek and search for ways to serve the underserved, minister to the incarcerated, register citizens to vote, provide for the poor and assure hope for the hopeless throughout Huntsville-Madison County for the past 35 years, and continues to be an exemplar of servant citizenship; and,

WHEREAS, Janie Adams Holifield is a retired educator, the daughter of the late Clarence and Jennie M. Adams. Born in the small cotton hamlet of Leighton, Alabama, as one of eight children, she spent her formative years in Leighton, where she received her early education in a white-framed, one-room church that also served as the schoolhouse in Colbert County. During her teen years, her family moved to Sheffield, Alabama, where she attended Sterling High School and eventually graduated; and,

WHEREAS, upon graduating from Alabama A&M College in 1958 with a Bachelor of Science degree in the field of Education, she was hired by the late Welton Reynolds as a first grade teacher at W. C. Handy Elementary School in Florence, Alabama. Her first class was composed of 50 bright-eyed and eager students. Being in the segregated South, there were very little resources and even fewer outdated and ragged textbooks that could provide an adequate education for African-American children. The time was just four years after the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. However, Mrs. Holifield, the eternal optimist, believing that every child could be taught and being armed with nothing more than a chalkboard, a box of chalk and a dust rag, taught the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. In addition to being a first grade teacher, she also served as the school's librarian from 1963-1965. She spent nearly a decade there, only to leave W. C. Handy to marry Freeman Holifield, Sr., in 1965; and,

WHEREAS, her educational career has been filled with many "firsts", including being one of the first African-American principals at Elkmont

RESOLUTION 16-184

PAGE 2 OF 3

Elementary School in Limestone County from 1967-1968. She was also one of the very first graduate students to be admitted in the Master's Program in Elementary Education established at the newly renamed Alabama A&M University. Under the direction of her late graduate advisor, Dr. Sprugen Q. Bryant, she received her Master's degree in Elementary Education and Administration in 1967. She was also among the first African-American teachers to integrate the teaching ranks at Riverton Middle School in Madison County, Alabama in 1977. She became the first African-American assistant principal at Gurley High School in Madison County, Alabama; and,

WHEREAS, Mrs. Holifield's teaching career also spanned across the Atlantic to Germany, where she taught as an elementary school teacher for the Department of Defense School System from 1971 to 1974 in Kaiserslautern, West Germany, and from 1980 to 1983 in Darmstadt, West Germany. She has been a life-long supporter of Alabama A&M University. As a Gold Life Member of the Alabama A&M University Alumni Association, she has donated her time, energy and efforts to raising funds for the Council Challenge Campaign throughout the years. She has also been an avid supporter of the Athletic Department by being a member of the Athletic Community Resource Group (ACRG), the Huntsville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; the Harris Home for Children; First Missionary Baptist Church (FMBC); the Daughters (AEAONMS), where she is a Past Illustrious Commandress and Past Imperial Deputy of Egyptian Parade of Stars, as well as a past member of the Order of Eastern Star, Mizpah Chapter #37 and the Golden Circle; and,

WHEREAS, she has been happily married for the past 50 years to Freeman Holifield, Sr. She is the mother of a daughter, Dr. Quintaniay Holifield of Baltimore, Maryland, and a son, LTC Freeman Holifield, Jr., USAF.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council and Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, gratefully acknowledge and congratulate Mrs. Janie Adams Holifield and the Rosetta James Foundation, and extend best wishes for continued success in all future endeavors.

ADOPTED this the 10th day of March, 2016.

President of the City Council of the
City of Huntsville, Alabama

RESOLUTION 16-184
PAGE 3 OF 3

APPROVED this the 10th day of March, 2016.

Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama